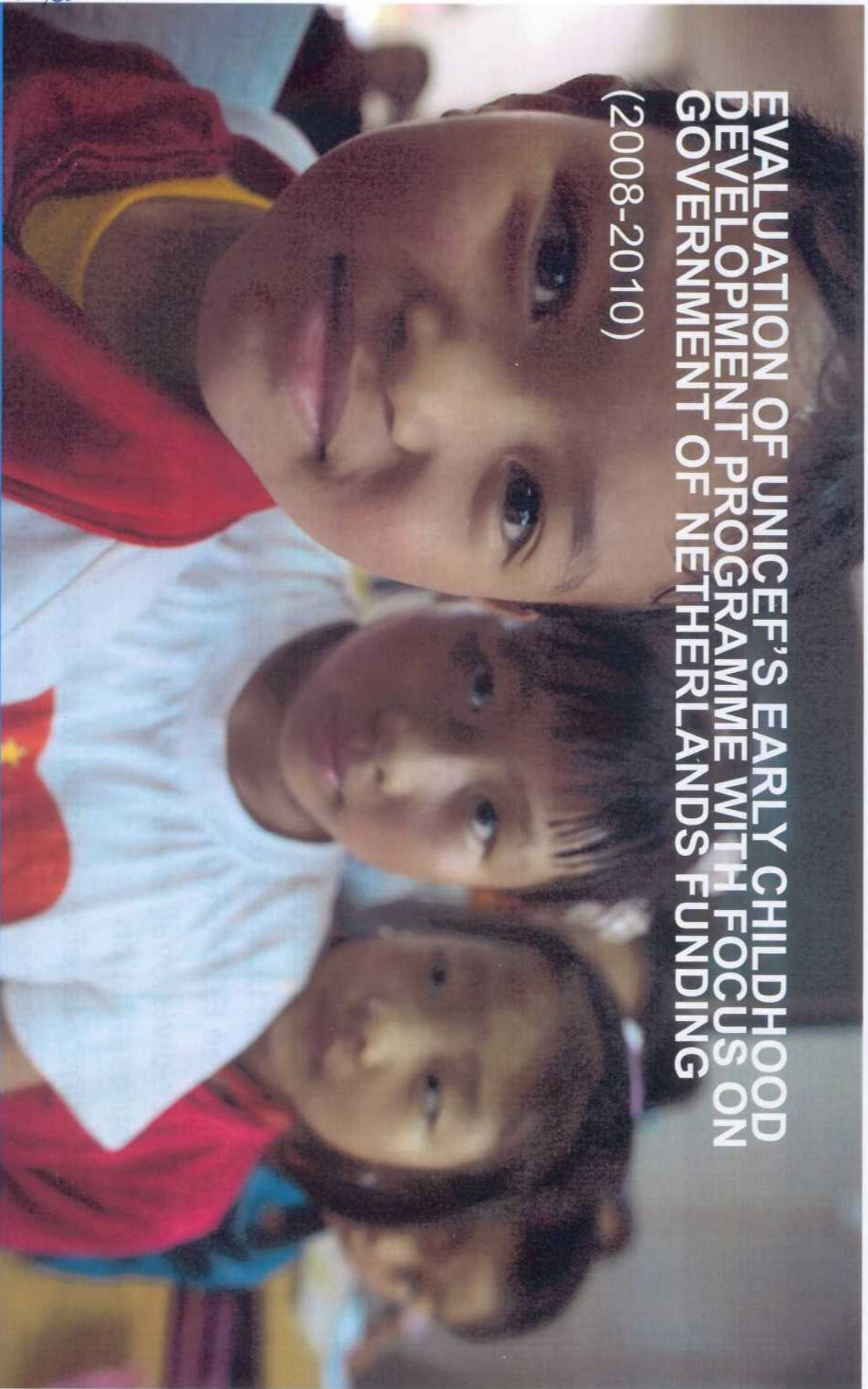


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PP11-130

**EVALUATION OF UNICEF'S EARLY CHILDHOOD  
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME WITH FOCUS ON  
GOVERNMENT OF NETHERLANDS FUNDING  
(2008-2010)**



unite for  
children

unicef 

# Overview / Process

- **First attempt to comprehensively evaluate UNICEF's work on ECD**
- **Government of Netherlands funding (2008-10) provided a major impetus**
- **An independent evaluation conducted by a team from Mathematica Policy Research w/ support of national consultants in 4 case study countries (Cambodia, Nepal, Ghana, Tanzania)**
- **Managed by the Evaluation Office, close engagement with the ECD Unit, PD and the case study COs**
- **Inter-divisional advisory group which had regional office representation**
- **Country-level evaluation reference groups in 4 countries**
- **Main stakeholders (involved) include national govts; UNICEF and partners; ECD donors and financiers**

# Evaluation Objectives

- **Provide an analytical review of progress achieved in implementing ECD programme and identify key successes and gaps and constraints that need to be addressed.**
- **Assess performance using the OECD-DAC standard evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.**
- **Examine cross-cutting issues, including use of human-rights-based approach to programming, results-based management and equity.**
- **Generate evidence-based lessons and recommendations to strengthen ongoing efforts and new initiatives, including replication and scaling up.**

# Background on GoN Funding

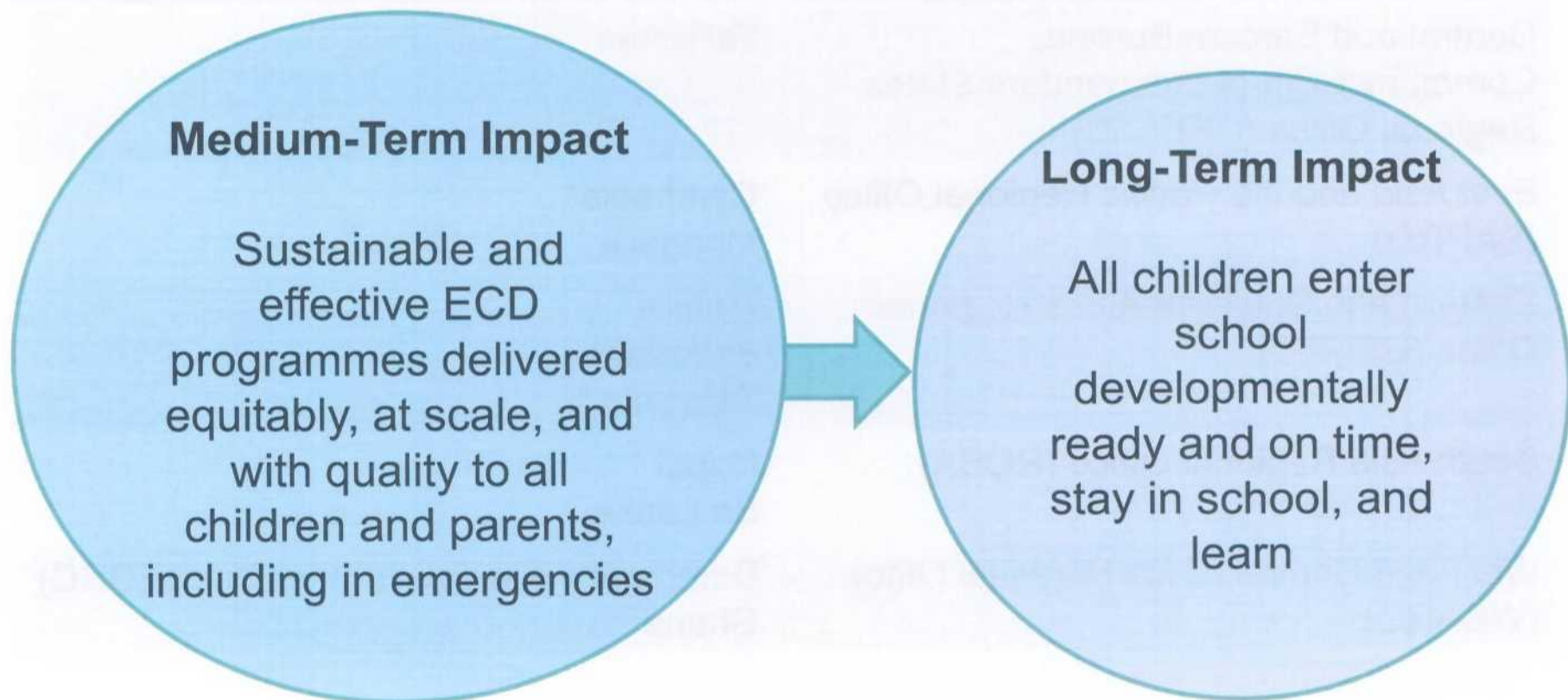
- Total 13.5 million US\$, \$10.5 million to the 10 selected countries, ranging from a total of 10 to more than 65% of the total ECD CO budget (average 25%)
- For ROs these funds were essentially all they had to put to ECD (about \$200,000 each)
- For HQ, most significant source of funding for ECD
- (Evaluation scope much wider than the GoN funded activities)

## UNICEF Regional and Country Offices Receiving GoN Cooperation Programme Funding

Regional Offices	Country Office
Central and Eastern Europe, Commonwealth of Independent States Regional Office (CEE/CIS)	Tajikistan
East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO)	Cambodia* Mongolia
Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO)	Malawi Swaziland Tanzania *
South Asia Regional Office (ROSA)	Nepal * Sri Lanka
West and Central Africa Regional Office (WCARO)	Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) Ghana *

Note: The Americas and Caribbean Regional Office (TACRO) and the Middle East and Northern Africa Regional Office (MENA) participated in the UNICEF-GoN Programme, but no COs in those regions received funds.

# The Ultimate Impacts of Effective ECD Policy Implementation for Programmes and Children



# Evaluation Scope

- **Global-level analysis**
  - Assessment of ECD initiatives at HQ and RO level
  - Assessment of HQ and RO support for ECD programming at CO level
  - Synthesis of country-level findings and internet-survey findings (75 countries)
  - Assessment of role of GoN funding
  
- **Country-level analysis**
  - Assessment of components of ECD programming at CO level
  - Comparison of ECD strategies, activities, and results across the 10 GoN-funded countries
  - Assessment of role of GoN funding

# Evaluation Questions

- Clustered under the OECD/DAC criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability)
- Addressed the three strategic objectives described in the UNICEF-GoN proposal (as per UNICEF MTSP focus):
  - Mainstreaming
  - Capacity building
  - Knowledge generation and dissemination
- Cross-cutting issues, including HRBA, gender equality and reaching the marginalized and disadvantaged



# Evaluation Design

- **Multi-method but mostly qualitative, retrospective**
  - Categorization and thematic analysis
  - Triangulation across sources
  - Quantitative secondary data and internet-based survey integrated into analysis as appropriate
  
- **Analysis of selected indicators**
  - Based on evaluation questions and topics
  - Evaluation ratings on each indicator for each country and HQ/ROs, as applicable
  - Cross-country comparisons

# Data Sources

- **Desk review of documents/data from 10 GoN countries, 7 ROs and HQ ECD Unit provided reports**
- **Site visits to 4 case study countries, including interviews, focus groups, and observations**
  - Cambodia, Nepal, Ghana, and Tanzania selected in consultation with HQ
- **Executive interviews with key informants at global level**
  - 9 HQ, 7 RO, 1 GoN, 8 Advisory Board members and other partners
- **Internet-based survey of 123 UNICEF COs**
  - 75 COs responded for a response rate of 61 percent

# **Key Findings / Conclusions**

## Overall Findings / Conclusions

- UNICEF's ECD strategies were **effective in meeting targets related to outputs** (such as number of parents trained), but there is **scant evidence of effectiveness in improving intervention quality and outcomes** for children and families.
- UNICEF's ECD strategies and the UNICEF-GoN Programme funding were **relevant and appropriate** to making progress toward targeted outcomes.
- GoN funding in the 10 countries **increased awareness of and commitment to ECD** among national and subnational leaders, catalyzing efforts aimed at increasing access and quality of services offered to families and children.
- The GoN's multiyear investment **increased UNICEF's influence, reach and credibility** as a partner in ECD at the country, regional and global levels.

## Effectiveness of Mainstreaming...

- **Clear communication** about the benefits of ECD investments **contributed to mainstreaming.**
- Evaluation respondents viewed **intersectoral approaches** as **desirable for supporting integrated, holistic ECD.**
- **Universal scale-up** of ECD interventions **can produce rapid increases in coverage**, but may be associated with **compromised service quality and lack of equity in access to services.**
- **Involvement of the finance ministry** in the ECD policy and planning process and costing studies are **useful** in shaping policy development, advocacy and budgeting for ECD.



**Cambodia**

## Effectiveness of Building Capacity for ECD

- **Investments in preparing and disseminating high-quality resource materials enhance capacity** of rights holders and duty bearers.
- **Frequent turnover of staff and volunteers creates challenges.**
- **Parent exposure to ECD interventions/messages is indeterminable** because of minimal data but intensity of what is offered is low and unlikely to change behavior.
- **UNICEF does not use a systematic approach** to assessing ECD capacity gaps, implementing capacity-building activities, documenting participation, and using data to inform decision making.
- **UNICEF's ECD capacity has grown but resource constraints (too few staff and too little ECD expertise) limit effectiveness.**

## Effectiveness of Generating and Disseminating Knowledge for ECD

- The **efficiency** of knowledge generation and dissemination at both the global and country levels is **diminished by a lack of coordinated, systematic planning and rigorous evaluations**.
- UNICEF's **promotion and use of findings from the MICS4 ECD module data are expected to continue to produce substantial benefits** to all levels of the organization and to country counterparts.
- Current knowledge management **practices within UNICEF do not adequately allow public access to findings** from previous and ongoing research and evaluation projects.



## Service Coverage, Quality/Efficiency and Sustainability

- **ECD service coverage** of center-based pre-primary education has expanded, but **coverage and quality are uneven.**
- **Few services available for infants and toddlers.**
- **Systems** are not yet in place to provide adequate training, monitoring and technical assistance **necessary for improving quality of programming.**
- **Scant evidence of sustainability.**



**Ghana**

# Adequacy of ECD Investments (Percentage)

Country Office reports current levels of investment are inadequate for sustaining ECD infrastructure	83
Projected levels of investment are inadequate for expansion of planned ECD services (14 % no expansion)	69
<b>ECD Service Funding Gaps:</b>	
Infrastructure/physical resources	24
Staff (number and trainings)	24
Nutrition and health	17
Reaching underserved/disadvantaged groups	16
Support/training for parents	14
Capacity and development	14
Community centers and services	10
M & E and research	9

Source: ECD Country Office Internet Survey (September 2010).  
 Sample Size: 74 out of 123 eligible countries.  
 Respondents could indicate more than one area.

## Equity, Reaching the Less Reached and Disadvantaged

- **Country-level capacities** to improve access for less reached and disadvantaged children were **limited by lack of data and strategies** for increasing access.
- Globally, **UNICEF's role in providing leadership** in encouraging innovation in advocacy to reach underserved populations **is critical to making progress** in this area.
- **Inadequate funding** a major constraint in reaching less reached areas.



# Recommendations

## Recommendations: Mainstreaming ECD Policies into National Policies, Plans and Services

- **Seek stable, multiyear funding** of policy mainstreaming strategies to catalyze the transition from ECD policy development and adoption to high-quality implementation.
- **Identify a summary indicator** or small set of indicators for ECD that could be tracked and reported at subnational, national, regional and global levels to focus advocacy and mainstreaming, build awareness and track progress toward critical outcomes.
- **Promote use of the ECD Resource Pack** to inform country counterparts about the benefits of ECD investments and develop versions tailored for targeted stakeholder audiences.

# Recommendations: Building Capacity for ECD

- **Develop and advocate for implementation of a systematic approach to capacity building** that includes assessing needs, implementing evidence-based training, tracking completion of service provider training and parenting education and assessing and evaluating outcomes.
- **Continue to invest in existing resources** for capacity building, such as the ECD Resource Pack and ECDVU, and **develop new resources** to address capacity gaps.
- **Invest in developing models for parent/caregiver training** based on research evidence about the dosage, content and training approaches that are likely to produce intended outcomes.
- **Hire child development specialists** to strengthen the role of the ECD Unit within UNICEF HQ, and have dedicated ECD advisors in each RO.

# Recommendations: Generating and Disseminating Knowledge for ECD

- **Develop a multiyear, integrated research and evaluation agenda**, coordinated across organizational levels and regions, that includes a continuum of formative and summative evaluation to support programme improvement.
- **Continue to invest in the MICS4 ECD module** and to advocate for its use by more countries.
- **Work with COs and country partners to fully develop Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS)** for the conception-to-8 age span, use ELDS as the basis for developing training and monitoring systems and evaluate their effects on targeted outcomes.



# Recommendations: ECD Services, Planning and Partnerships

## ECD Service Coverage, Quality/Efficiency, Sustainability and Scale-Up

- **Advocate for investment by country partners in initiatives to improve quality** of center-based ECD interventions, especially in countries in which coverage has expanded rapidly
- **Advocate for increased funding levels** with intersectoral donor groups

## Planning, Management, Coordination and Partnerships

- **Prioritize development of results frameworks** for holistic ECD.

## Recommendations: Equity / Reaching the Less Reached and Disadvantaged

- **Allocate substantial resources to improving access to ECD interventions for the less reached and disadvantaged.**
- **Develop a set of strategies to increase access to ECD interventions for disadvantaged and marginalized populations.**
- **Develop tools and data sources for monitoring access to ECD services among disadvantaged groups.**

## For More Information

- Global synthesis report:  
[http://www.unicef.org/evaluation/files/ECD\\_Eval\\_FINAL\\_REPORT\\_Oct\\_2011.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/evaluation/files/ECD_Eval_FINAL_REPORT_Oct_2011.pdf)
- Krishna Belbase, UNICEF Evaluation Office, [kbelbase@unicef.org](mailto:kbelbase@unicef.org)
- Nurper Ulkuer, UNICEF ECD Unit, [nulkuer@unicef.org](mailto:nulkuer@unicef.org)
- Kim Boller, Mathematica, [kboller@mathematica-mpr.com](mailto:kboller@mathematica-mpr.com)

# Commentary and follow up plan

## **GENERAL**

- The Evaluation was important to **verify** the problems and bottlenecks for ECD
- Presented **new information** derived from
  - actual implementation of the programme, and
  - in-depth analysis of some of the bottlenecks in selected countries
- Developed a better understanding of how to move the ***ECD Agenda*** forward.
- **Management response** will soon be ready.

# Major challenges and possible actions

- **Mainstreaming ECD into Policies and Programmes**
  - Assessment and analysis of *different approaches* (sectoral/multi-sectoral/integrated) to ECD policy and programmes is planned.
  - Linking to Knowledge Generation and Dissemination, information will be collected *on globally agreed indicators and targets* that will inform policies, programmes and service provisions.
- **Capacity Development**
  - First phase of capacity development review, looking internally at *UNICEF's capacity*, is ongoing.
  - National level capacity development reviews and plans are expected to be part of the regional/country level plans.

## Major challenges and possible actions -2

- **Generating and Disseminating Knowledge in ECD**
  - Comprehensive Research, Innovation and Communication Strategy for ECD is underway:
    - Framing ongoing efforts e.g. PEDS, Parenting, and CBCCs.
    - Partnering with research and development institutions to identify areas of operational research for the long term Research Agenda.
    - Processes are planned to continually link policy research and programmes to monitoring and evaluation.
- **Scaling up – reaching the most marginalized to close the gap – *an equity-based M&E Framework for ECD***
  - Linking to the Equity agenda and using respective indicators, the focus will be on on the hard-to-reach populations.
  - MICS and other similar surveys will be the basis of mapping out the unreached and identifying bottlenecks to achieve results for ECD.

# Major challenges and possible actions -3

- **Funding gap**

- Strong policy advocacy and communication framework is needed for increased investment in ECD - *Costing, financing and investment case studies (from KM activities) will be used.*
- Advocate with likeminded donors to fund integrated programme models in early childhood.

- **Partnerships**

- The ECD Programme funded by the GoN has made a headstart in strenghtening global as well as regional partnerships (e.g. CG, ADEA, ARNEC).
- Opportunities will be sought for building politically and financially ***stronger alliances to position ECD high on the global development agenda.***

# Questions and Answers

The image shows a screenshot of the Blackboard Collaborate interface. The window title is "UNICEF1-NY - Blackboard Collaborate". The interface includes a menu bar (File, Edit, View, Tools, Window, Help), a toolbar with icons for audio and video, and a main content area. On the left side, there are three panels: "AUDIO & VIDEO", "PARTICIPANTS", and "CHAT - Supervised".

Three blue arrows with red numbers point to specific features:

- 1** points to the "PARTICIPANTS" panel, specifically to the user "Celeste" who is the Moderator (You).
- 2** points to the "AUDIO & VIDEO" panel, specifically to the "Talk" and "Video" buttons.
- 3** points to the "CHAT - Supervised" panel, specifically to the chat input area at the bottom.

The main content area displays a document with text that is mostly illegible due to blurring. The text appears to be a list of bullet points related to ECD (Early Childhood Development) and funding gaps.



**Thank you!**

